

NASPE's Innovative State HR Management Program Nomination
North Carolina's Knowledge Transfer through Knowledge Management Program
Program Summary

By the year 2020, more than 30 percent of North Carolina's current state employees will be eligible for retirement. And by the year 2025, that number is expected to be in excess of 50 percent. These alarming statistics coupled with an emerging and very mobile younger workforce, and increasing budget restraints suggest a future where enormous amounts of critical institutional knowledge could be lost. North Carolina's new Knowledge Transfer (KT) program helps managers and supervisors identify the mission-critical positions, programs, tasks and activities in an agency or work unit, and then design a plan to capture and transfer the mission-critical knowledge or skills associated with those positions to others in the organization. The KT Program Administrator provides assistance and tools for managers to complete the process.

A manager can post a *Knowledge Transfer Learning Opportunity (KTLO)* within the work unit, the division, or agency-wide, whichever is appropriate. The posting includes a brief description of the program/position/task/activities, minimum requirements, and the learning objectives for the KTLO. Anyone meeting the minimum requirements stated on the posting can submit a KT Interest form for that opportunity. The KT Program Administrator will work with all the program participants and facilitate the process in accordance with the agency's KT policy and procedures. The learning opportunities can be for a single individual or a group. The critical knowledge holders or *Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)* will mentor/train the learners throughout the KTLO. Assessments are done at the conclusion of the learning process.

In summary, the KT program creates learning opportunities to help develop staff, preserves critical institutional knowledge, leverages best practices throughout the organization, and supports agency performance in achieving its overall strategic business goals. The program is scalable and can be implemented at any or all levels within an organization.

Program Title: North Carolina's *Knowledge Transfer through Knowledge Management Program*

State: North Carolina

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- 1. Brief Description of Program:** The *NC Knowledge Transfer through Knowledge Management Program* (KT&M) is a tool to assist agencies in three very important tasks: 1) Identifying mission-critical knowledge and skills that are at risk of being lost; 2) Assisting managers with a plan to determine the best method(s) to capture and codify that critical institutional knowledge and/or skill before lost; and 3) Providing managers with an integrated process to leverage the identified critical knowledge and skills throughout the work unit and/or the organization, as appropriate. In the process of preserving critical institutional knowledge and skills, the agency is developing and investing in its staff while also affecting organizational performance.
- 2. How Long Has Program Been Operational** (month and year): The program has been piloted in the North Carolina Office of State Personnel for one year. The agency's program policy and procedures were approved effective April 1, 2010.
- 3. Why was this program created?** (What problem(s) or issue(s) does it address?): North Carolina is facing a great number of impending retirements, an emerging and very mobile younger workforce and an ever increasing need for fiscal austerity; altogether they have created a pressing business need for a structured effort by HR to capture and transfer

critical organizational knowledge before it is lost. The NC Office of State Personnel for example, is facing a 43% retirement eligibility rate of its current workforce by the year 2015, and the state as a whole is facing a 51% eligibility rate by the year 2025. There has been no official plan or programs to help managers and supervisors prepare to deal with this dilemma of having enormous amounts of critical knowledge becoming at risk of being lost until this Knowledge Transfer through Knowledge Management (KT&M) program.

- 4. Why this program is a new and creative method:** This program is new because the state did not have an official program or effort aimed at addressing the employment issues stated above. It is a creative solution and approach to solving multiple problems through one program: 1) Linking critical positions, programs, tasks and activities in each work group to the organization's strategic plan, 2) Documenting and preserving mission-critical knowledge, 3) Leveraging mission-critical knowledge throughout the organization while developing the staff, and 4) Changing the culture of the organization to one of knowledge sharing and continuous learning. The program is modeled after the state's position vacancy announcement process. Managers and supervisors can post *Knowledge Transfer Learning Opportunities* whenever critical knowledge within their work unit is at risk of being lost, or a best practice can be leveraged throughout the organization. This program, created by the Office of State Personnel, can be implemented in any and all state agencies and the university system as the problems stated above are a state-wide challenge. Also there are actions that can be taken by proactive first-line managers and supervisors within their own work units, even if there is not an agency-wide KT program in effect.
- 5. What was the program's start up costs?** (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing

materials, technology and staff already in place.): There were no start-up costs for the program. Initially, extensive research was done by an internal project team, which developed the ground work for a KT program. Later, the leader of that team worked with another project team to develop the model for the program and was appointed as the KT Program Administrator. The only cost associated with the program has been the certification training for the Administrator in the discipline of Knowledge Management. The Program Administrator continues research and development activities to support the program, and creates and develops additional tools as needed. The Administrator is the only employee dedicated to the program in the Office of State Personnel at this time.

6. What are the program's operational costs? The only operational cost associated with the program is the salary of the Program Administrator.

7. How is this program funded? There is no budget or line-item in the budget for this program.

8. Did this program originate in your state? This model of the NC Knowledge Transfer Program originated in this state. The state's original knowledge transfer research information and process was adapted from the US Government Utilities Corporation, *Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Knowledge Retention Program*, which has been cited by many as best practices in the area of knowledge retention. The TVA is basically a plant processing environment and with their permission, we adapted parts of their KT process to fit our HR management needs.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If yes, how does this program differ? I am not aware of any similar programs or efforts to that of North Carolina's. As stated above, this is a new creative approach to knowledge management.

10. How do you measure the success of this program? The success and effectiveness of the program is measured by a set of performance metrics for a performance cycle, which plots actual against agency goals for each measure. They include: 1) *Participation Measures* which measure the percent of critical knowledge holders participating in the program, 2) *Satisfaction Measures* which compare percent of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) rating the process as successful and the percent of Learners rating the process as successful, 3) *Performance Measures* which compare the percentage of learners able to use the knowledge gained in current job and the percent decrease of critical knowledge at risk, and 4) *Development Measures* which compares percent of learners able to apply gained knowledge in personal career path and the percent able to close competency gaps with knowledge gained. An annual report to the Executive Director will evaluate the program.

11. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? The program will have been piloted within the NC Office of State Personnel for one year as of April, 2011. During this pilot phase many tools have been updated or developed to better support the program. An open enrollment course to train managers and supervisors state-wide in the basic KT process with the supporting tools has been implemented. As they face these employment issues on the front line, we equip them to implement knowledge transfer activities within their own work units, even if an agency-wide program has not been started yet. We have conducted a statewide KT webinar, as well as worked individually with managers who needed immediate assistance. This year, the campaign to push the program out state-wide to all agencies and universities will begin.